

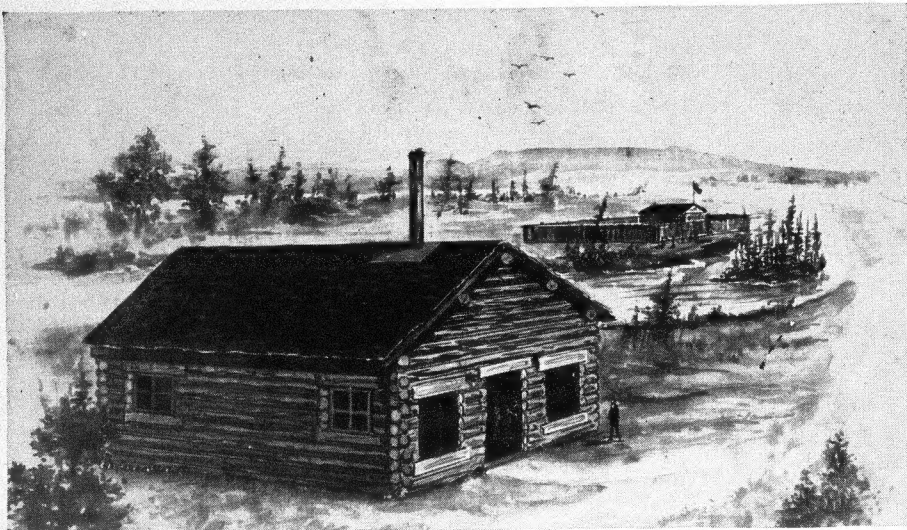
CALGARY

City of the foothills

by ROBERT J. C. STEAD



Distribution arranged by the Calgary Board of Trade



An early drawing of the Hudson's Bay Company trading post and Mounted Police post at Calgary in 1877.

From drawing by Stafford

Calgary—City of the Foothills

by ROBERT J. C. STEAD

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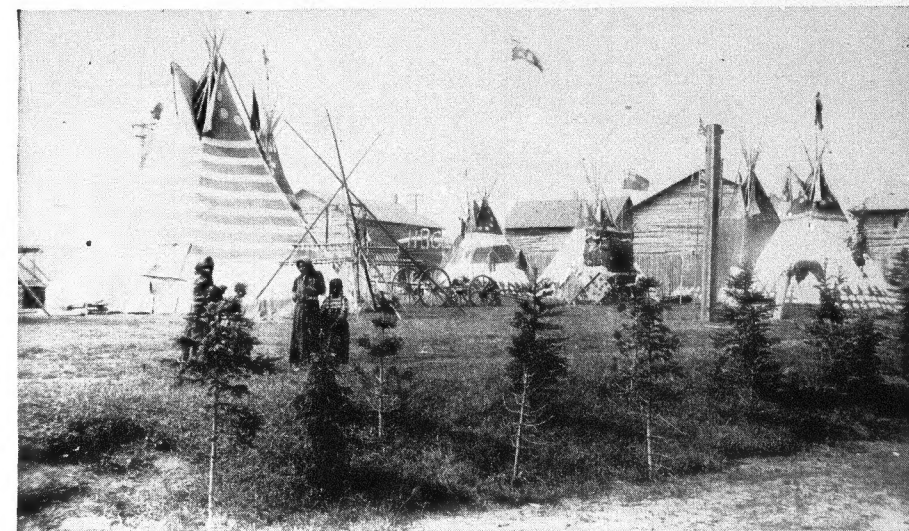
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EIGHT HUNDRED and forty miles west of Winnipeg, 620 miles east of Vancouver, and 138 miles north of the International Boundary, stands the City of Calgary. "Stands" is the right word; Calgary towers higher than any other city in the Dominion; its lowest levels are higher than the highest settlement in Eastern Canada. Located at the point where the hurrying blue-green waters of the beautiful Bow River are joined by the equally impatient Elbow, its geographical position is unique. At this spot

the rolling prairies, which have stretched continuously from Winnipeg, give way abruptly to the foothills, advance guard of the Rockies which in any other country would themselves be called mountains. At this point also the fertile but mostly treeless plains are succeeded by light and scattered timber areas deepening quickly into the heavy forests of the eastern slopes. Here, too, is one of the chief cross-roads of the nation; north-and-south railway and highway traffic through Calgary probably ex-

Sarcee Indians at the Hudson's Bay Company trading post in the early days of Calgary.

Marcell photo



ceeds that of any other Canadian city, while east and west are the main line of the Canadian Pacific Railway, the Trans-Canada Highway, and Trans-Canada Air Lines. From its position astride the Bow River Calgary commands the Bow Valley entrance to the mountains, which in turn commands the Kicking Horse Pass, the first route by which the western mountain barrier was pierced by steel and still the chief artery of travel between British Columbia and all other provinces.

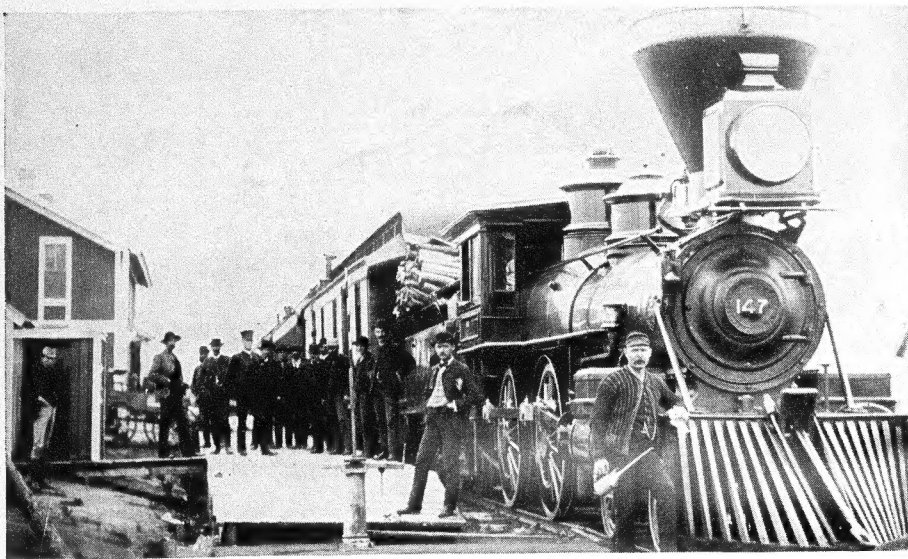
Calgary not only is the highest metropolis in Canada; it is, with the exception of Vancouver, the youngest major city. Unlike Winnipeg or Edmonton it has no history reaching back into the nebulous period of the West. It was not even a point on the

map until the junction of the Bow and the Elbow was selected as the site of a Mounted Police post by Colonel Macleod, in 1875. Even then the name Calgary was not applied to it; the post at first was known as Fort Brisebois, after Inspector Brisebois, who was in charge. The name was changed to Calgary at the suggestion of Colonel Macleod after the home of certain of his relatives on the Isle of Mull, Scotland. While there are differences of opinion as to the origin of the word the generally accepted view is that Calgary is a Gaelic term meaning clear running water—certainly an appropriate name for a place located on clear, cold mountain rivers like the Bow and the Elbow.

Calgary in 1890. The building with the tower is the first firehall.

Photo by Pollard





*Calgary station in
1884. C.P.R. photo*

The curious names of these two rivers have also attracted attention. Mr. Kenneth Coppock, whose researches into the early days of the Calgary area entitle him to speak with some authority, says the Bow River derived its name from the fact that the young firs along its banks supplied the Indians with excellent wood for their bows. Of this wood the best bows were made, and the name of the river was a natural derivation. The river now called the Elbow was originally known as the Swift, a name which is self-explanatory. The Swift came from the southwest, the Bow from the northwest; they joined at an angle approximating that of an elbow; settlement developed at the point of juncture, and the place began to be known as "The Elbow". In course of

time the name became attached to the lesser of the two rivers; the beautiful name Swift disappeared and was replaced by the appropriate but uneuphonious Elbow.

Although Calgary's existence as a geographic entity dates back only to 1875, the names of early explorers and missionaries are associated with the area. David Thompson is said to have reached the Bow River at that point in 1801; whether he was the first white man to gaze on the site of the future city remains in doubt. Rev. Robert Rundle, whose name is commemorated by one of the mountains in Banff National Park, appears to have been in the area in 1841, and the name of Father Lacombe is associated with it beginning in 1852. Rev. John MacDougall, although located near

*The Indian section of
the Parade which
heralds the Calgary
Stampede. It is
watched by 100,000
people annually.*

Rosettis Studios photo

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A rider of the plains
N.F.B. photo



Morley, no doubt included the future Calgary in his parish, beginning in 1873.

For some years after the establishment of the Mounted Police post the growth of Calgary was discouragingly slow. In 1884 the population amounted to only 500 people, and this notwithstanding the fact that the main line of the Canadian Pacific Railway had reached that point the previous year. The coming of the C.P.R., however, changed the destiny of Calgary. It had at first been expected that the transcontinental railway which the Canadian Government had pledged itself to build as a condition of British Columbia's entry into Confederation would follow the easier route through the mountains farther north, entering by way of Edmonton. The northern route certainly offered fewer engineering difficulties; it escaped the tremendous descent from Lake Louise to Field and the difficult clambering around the slide-beset slopes of Mount Macdonald (now evaded by means of the five-mile Connaught tunnel), but it was nearly 100 miles longer. (From Winnipeg to Vancouver *via* Edmonton is 1,572 miles; *via* Calgary, 1,474 miles.) A saving of 98 miles in haulage of every train that would go over the line for all time to come was a substantial credit against the greater cost and heavier gradients of the southern route. At any rate, the Bow Valley was chosen as the point of entry into the Rockies, and the

little Calgary hamlet found itself at the gates of destiny.

Heart of the Ranching Country

Availability of market facilities gave impulse to the beef industry which had already taken root in southern Alberta. Here were plains where the buffalo had roamed for uncounted centuries; here were deep coulees and river valleys affording water and shelter; here were a climate moderated by the remarkable Chinook, and grass of exceptional nutritional value. This combination of conditions meant that inevitably as the ranges in the United States became over-grazed the herds would move northward, and the possibility of developing a Canadian ranching industry on a large scale was recognized by the Dominion Government when, in 1881, regulations were established which permitted the leasing of areas up to 100,000 acres each to ranchers at a rental of one cent per acre per year, subject to certain conditions as to the grazing of cattle thereon. A number of large ranches were developed under this leasehold arrangement, and Calgary quickly became the "cow-town" of western Canada—a position she has never relinquished. Meat packing has become an important Calgary industry, and the volume of cattle handled by Calgary stockyards is exceeded by only two markets in Canada—Winnipeg and Toronto. Calgary is also an important centre of blooded and registered beef stock, and holds the largest annual

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bull sale on the continent each spring, when buyers from Canadian and United States' beef-raising areas meet to bid for the best beef bulls raised in North America. In the surrounding territory not only range grazing but the business of feeding and finishing beef cattle has developed to the point where Calgary beef is regarded as second to none.

Cattle ranching means also horses, and horses and cattle ranches mean cowboys. Much of the atmosphere of southern Alberta is redolent of the cowboy and his ways. It is a life which is hard but free; it calls for an exceptional degree of skilful horsemanship, no small measure of endurance, and a well-developed ability to take care of one's self in any circumstances. Such a life appealed irresistibly to adventurous young men everywhere, and they flowed into the country north, east, and south of Calgary. Soon they were augmented by the native-born, the sons—and daughters—of the ranch owners and other early settlers. Among them they gave a texture to the life of Alberta that is not found in any other province. With the coming of the wheat and dairy farmer and the breaking up of the large ranges the cowboy has found his freedom somewhat restricted. Anathema to him is the barbed wire fence; he puts more heart than you know into crooning the popular song, "Don't Fence Me In". Progress—if it be progress—is crowding him deeper into the foothills or on to the semi-arid plains, but once a year he blossoms forth in the world's greatest display of daring and skilful horsemanship—the Calgary Stampede.

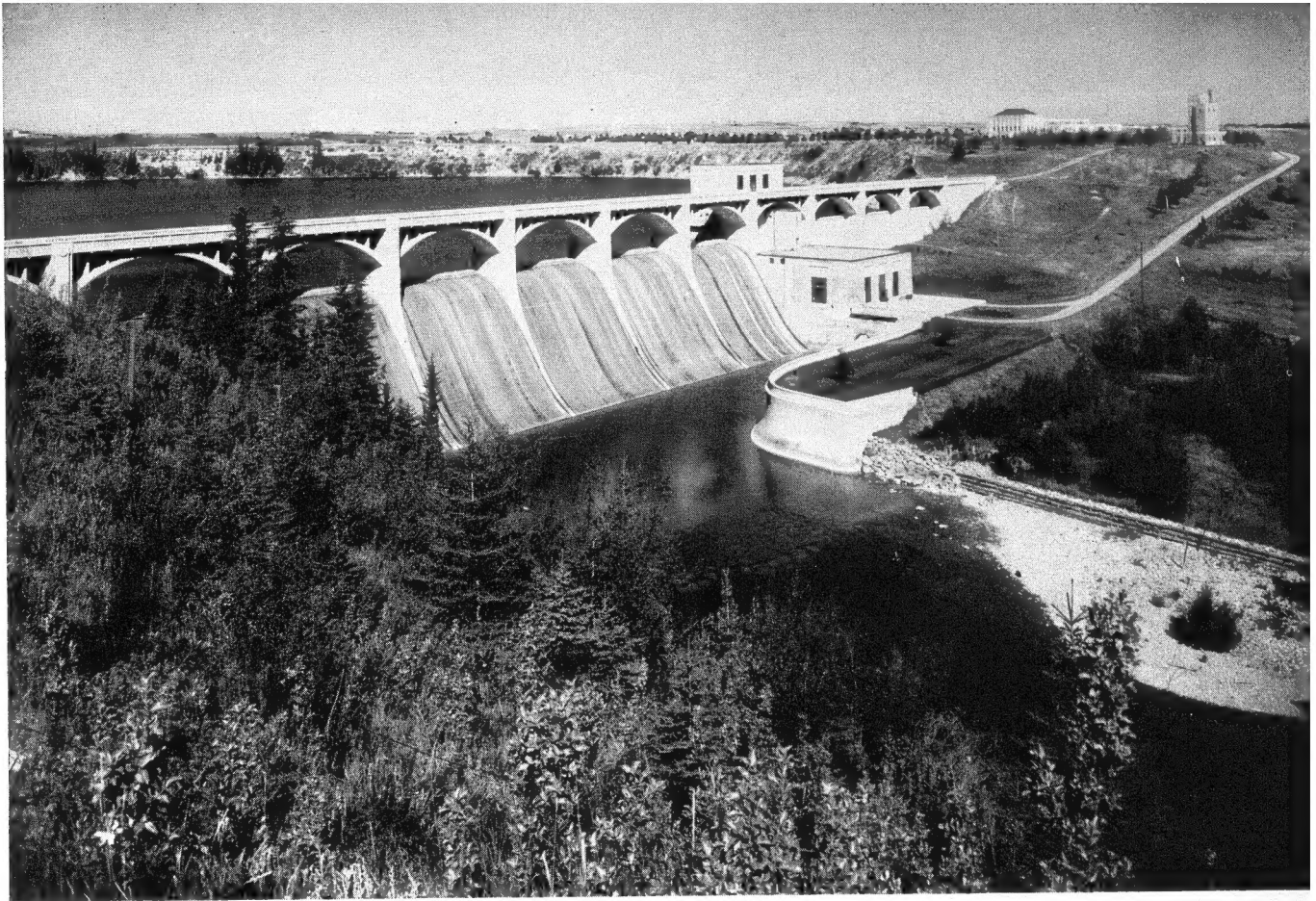
Credit for founding the Calgary Stampede is given to four of the big ranchers of 1912: George Lane, A. E. Cross, Pat Burns, and Archie McLean. This annual demonstration of skill, speed, and endurance in all that relates to the old "home on the range" draws competitors from all over North America, and visitors from literally all parts of the world. In 1949 attendance for the six-day show exceeded 400,000.

Farming and Irrigation

Hard on the heels of beef came wheat, and by 1890 farm settlers in considerable

numbers were moving in. The public lands were then and for many years afterward administered by the Dominion Government, which had adopted a policy of granting free homesteads to settlers who would bring certain areas under cultivation and make specified improvements. The people of eastern Canada, the British Isles, Europe, and the United States were exposed to the magnet of free land, and settlement rolled into the prairies. The soil of southern Alberta is very fertile, and except in the foothills and about the great river-canyons and coulées which cut through the country, almost every acre can be brought under cultivation. But no place in the world has been given all natural advantages; so in southern Alberta the extreme fertility of the soil is limited by irregular and somewhat scanty rainfall. In the areas adjoining the foothills there is usually enough rainfall for good crop production, but farther east the precipitation thins out and in some years is unequal to the raising of even light crops of cereals. Whether such areas, which are well adapted to ranching should ever have been brought under cultivation is a matter for hind-sight scrutiny, but it is questionable if any government could have followed any other policy. In occasional years, and sometimes for a number of years in succession, these "dry" areas have enough rainfall to produce excellent crops; 40 bushels of wheat to the acre and proportionate yields of oats, barley, and flax are by no means unusual. To argue with people not to settle on such lands, to tell them that when the dry cycles came again they would not get their seed back, would have been to shout against the gale.

But a solution of the problem, at least in so far as it applies to some millions of acres, was in the crucible. The Canadian Pacific Railway had acquired by way of government grants some 34,500,000 acres of land, extending roughly through the area from Winnipeg to the Rockies. The railway company recognized from the first that if the land was to be of any real value to the country—and to the company—it must be



Glenmore Dam spillway located in southern section of Calgary on the Elbow River, source of the city's water supply.

Rosettis Studios photo

made to produce. The mere selling of the land at two, three, or four dollars an acre, as in the early days, would be only a temporary resource. If the railway were to thrive it must have production; not the production of a few great ranches, but the production of thousands of farms intensively cultivated and supporting a substantial population. There was one thing to do with the dry land; irrigate it. Rivers like the Red Deer, the Bow, the Highwood, the Oldman, and the Milk, pouring down out of the Rockies, afforded an unfailing supply of water; level plains, sloping gently eastward, awaited only the life-giving touch of that water to convert arid prairies into gardens of production. In 1902, therefore, an irrigation department was organized by the C.P.R. with Mr. (later Colonel) J. S. Dennis as Superintendent and Chief Engineer, and the headquarters of this department were established at Calgary. An

area of some 3,000,000 acres southeast of Calgary was laid out for development as an irrigation block, the water for the purpose to be diverted from the Bow River at Calgary and at Bassano.

Calgary thus became the administrative headquarters of the largest irrigation enterprise in America. And as it was not practicable to divorce the administration of irrigated land from that of dry land, the entire land settlement business of the Canadian Pacific Railway was centralized in Calgary under its Department of Natural Resources. This business consisted of much more than the mere selling of land; the company's paternal attitude toward its settlers expressed itself in "ready-made farms", demonstration farms, pure-bred stock programs, and other forms of assistance—all of which were administered from Calgary. The association between the farming areas and the

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city became as intimate as the earlier association between rancher and cow-town, if somewhat less romantic.

Just as beef steers provided a basis for the meat packing industry in Calgary, so wheat provided the basis for a flour milling industry which has reached large proportions. Calgary flour mills have a daily (24 hours) capacity of 8,250 barrels. Elevator storage capacity in Calgary now exceeds 4,600,000 bushels. And along with this grain farming an important dairy and diversified farming industry has developed. Dairy cows, hogs, sheep, and poultry add to the agricultural wealth of the community; in 1948 more than 126,000 hogs and 69,000 sheep were unloaded at the Calgary stockyards. Direct shipments to packing plants made substantial additions to these totals.

Fuels

But the natural wealth of Alberta does not lie all on the surface. Millions of years ago nature chose the areas now lying east of the Rockies as the depository of one of the most extensive coal beds in the world. The existence of this coal was well known to the early settlers and ranchers, who occasionally gathered their own fuel from outcroppings along the banks of rivers and ravines. But in addition to coal there was another fuel, natural gas, which is now used almost exclusively for heating and cooking. In Calgary natural gas is practically the only fuel used (why not, when it can be bought for domestic purposes at 26 cents per thousand cubic feet?) and the result is literally a smokeless city.

Important as coal and natural gas have been and are in Calgary's economy, they were destined to be far exceeded by another of nature's deposits—oil. Discovery of oil in Turner Valley, some 45 miles southwest of

Calgary, opened the largest source of crude petroleum in Canada, established Calgary as the oil city of the West, and touched off the Calgary oil boom—an event quite as spectacular in its way as the burning of gas wells in Turner Valley, although shorter lived. The boom, occurring in the 1912-14 period, collapsed, leaving the industry with a black eye and its share of bankruptcy, but a few persistent souls held on, and eventually Turner Valley came into its own. For many years it was the chief oil-producing area in Canada, and it was a natural thing that the refining and distribution of this oil should centralize in Calgary, where four refineries have been built with a combined capacity of 15,600 barrels per day. While recent discoveries in other parts of the province have somewhat changed the picture, Turner Valley in 1948 still produced about 40 per cent of all Alberta's oil. Development of the Valley also continues; in 1948 almost 70,000 feet of new drilling was done and six new wells were brought into production.

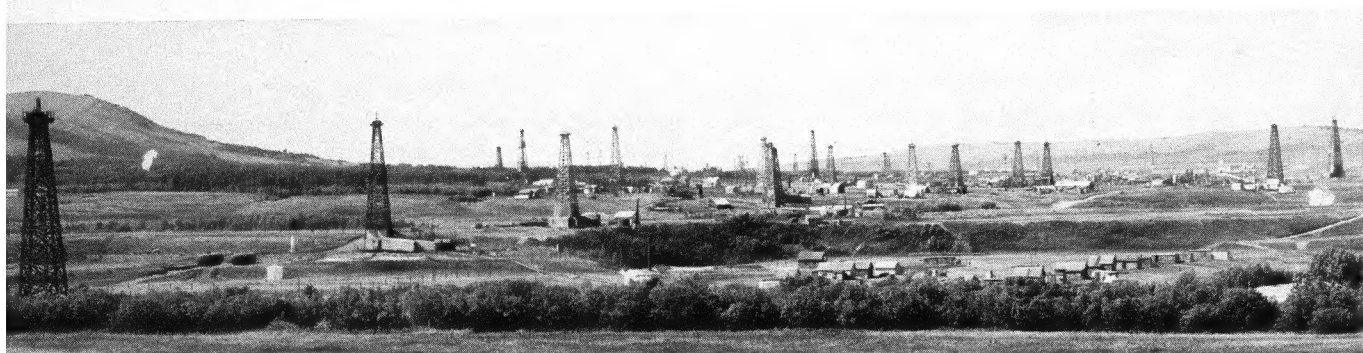
Calgary's oil interests, however, are by no means limited to the Turner Valley area. With the discovery and development of Leduc, Redwater, and other fields, no fewer than 54 major American oil companies have established Canadian head offices in Calgary. It is largely this development money which has made Calgary the fifth city in Canada in the amount of cheques cashed, which in the first half of 1949 totalled \$1,136,600,000.

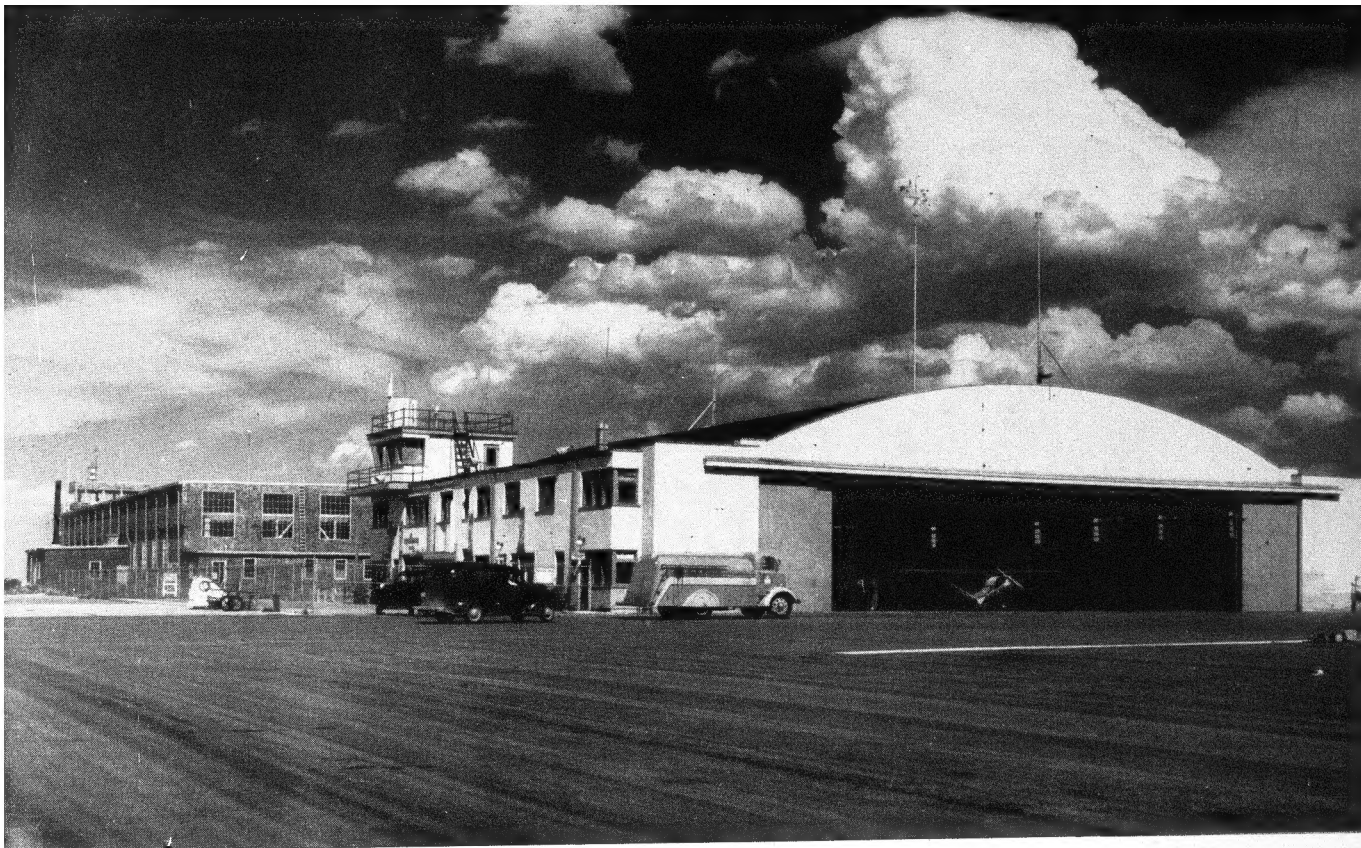
Transportation

Aside from business based directly on the natural resources of the country, Calgary derives much of her prosperity from her favourable commercial situation which has already been mentioned. North-and-south railway traffic was established in 1891

View of Turner Valley, dotted with derricks of the oil wells.

Oliver Studio photo





Calgary's municipal airport

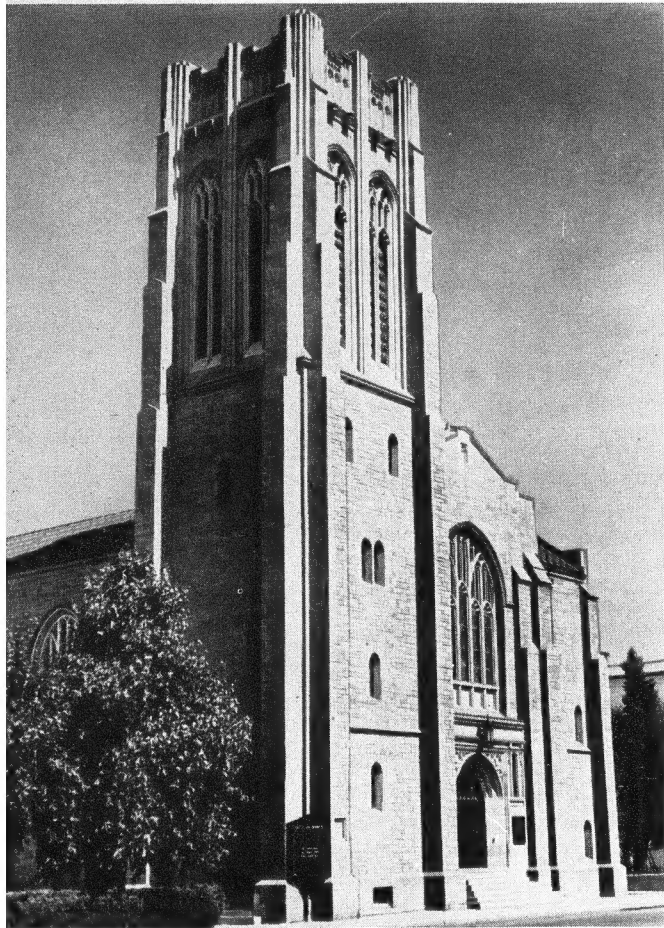
Rosettis Studios photo

when the C.P.R. line to Edmonton started operation, and was consolidated two years later when the line southward to Macleod came into service. In 1914, the Grand Trunk Pacific Railway (now absorbed in the Canadian National Railways) began operation into Calgary, affording direct service northeastward. Calgary's strategic position on the railway map of the Dominion was recognized when in 1912 the C.P.R. established there its Ogden shops for the service and repair of railway rolling stock. Today six passenger trains a day come or go directly between Calgary and Vancouver, eight between Calgary and Winnipeg, eight between Calgary and Edmonton, four between Calgary and Lethbridge, two connect *via* the Crowsnest route with Vancouver, and there are many local services.

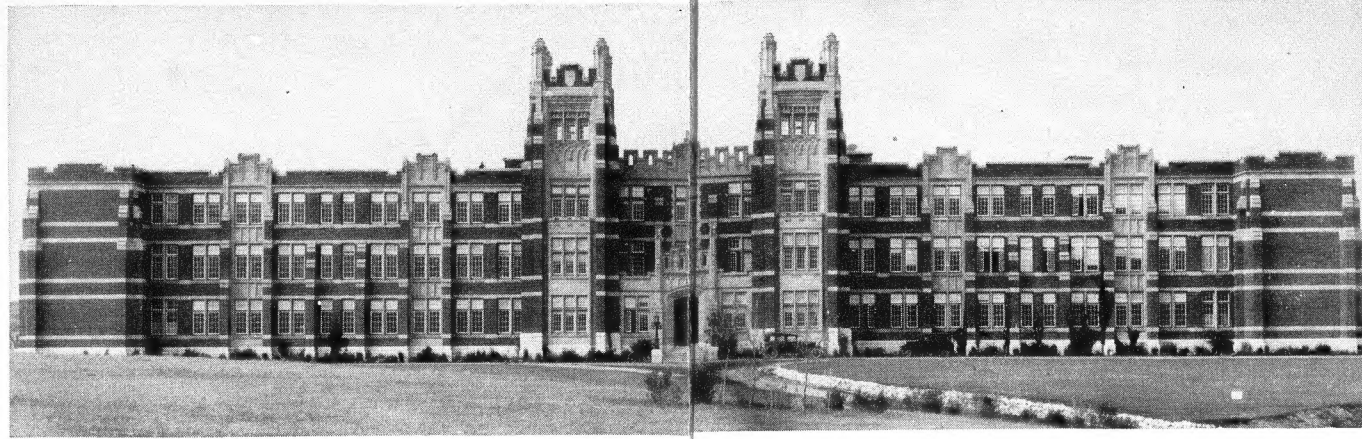
As with railways, so with highways. Before the coming of the automobile a prairie trail was a "road", but the popularity of the motor car soon engendered a demand for gravelled, and, if possible, paved highways.

Alberta is a vast province with still only a sparse population, and an adequate network of paved highways is something to be achieved only through the process of time. But the work is progressing apace. In addition to the Trans-Canada Highway, which leads west on a paved road to Banff and Lake Louise connecting with the Banff-Jasper Highway, the main north-and-south routes connecting the United States with Edmonton and the North pass through Calgary. From Coutts to Calgary and on to Edmonton is all paved road. Calgary is also headquarters of Western Canadian Greyhound Bus Lines, which provide continent-wide connections.

In recent times the aeroplane has been playing an increasingly important part in western transportation, and to accommodate this traffic Calgary has a municipal airport with an area of over 1,200 acres and hard-surfaced runways 6,400 feet long and 150 feet wide. Here the Dominion Government maintains a weather bureau



Knox United Church. Rosettis Studios photo



Main Building of The Provincial Institute of Technology and Art. The west side (left) is used for the Calgary Faculty of Education and the University Demonstration school. Students from all four western provinces attend. Oliver Studio photo

where the latest weather information is at all times available.

Calgary is on the main line of the Trans-Canada Air Lines and ranks fifth in Canada for air passengers boarded.

In such a strategic position it is not remarkable that Calgary has become one of the great commercial centres of Canada. Its commercial history dates back to the time of Fort Brisebois, when the first rude trading posts were established by the Hudson's Bay Company and the I. G. Baker Company, and supplies were freighted in by bull train from Montana and by Red River cart from Edmonton. From that day to this, with its 3,000-ton freight trains, its motor cars and aeroplanes, is a far cry in development, but as a matter of history hardly a moment of time. The present store of the Hudson's Bay

Company in Calgary, regarded as one of the finest department stores in Canada, and other wholesale and retail outlets of scarcely less distinction, epitomize the growth of Calgary from trading post to commercial metropolis.

Industrial Development

With the growth of trade came the urge and opportunity to produce much of what was required instead of importing it from elsewhere, and Calgary became a manufacturing centre of some importance. The municipal manual published by the City of Calgary lists no less than seventy-eight types of manufacturing business carried on in that city, ranging alphabetically from aerated water to yeast, and from artificial limbs to woodworking machinery. Prominent among these industries are flour milling, meat packing, oil refining, wood working,

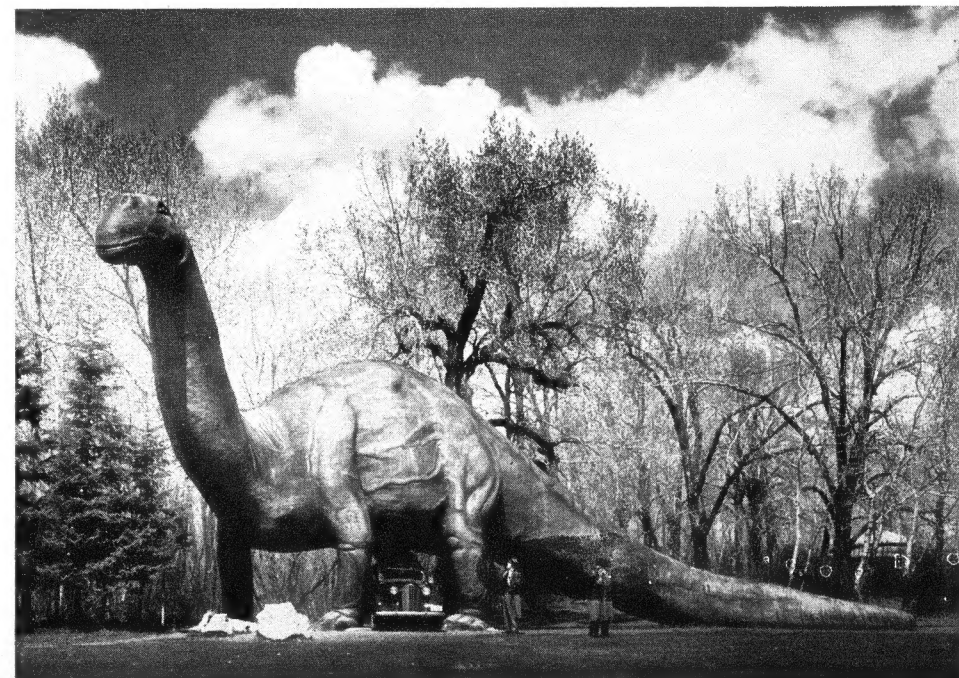


The Palliser Hotel C.P.R. photo

The War Memorial in Central Park.

E. W. Cadman,
Oliver Studio photo

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A dinosaur — one of the many models of prehistoric creatures in St. George's Island Park.

Rosettis Studios photo

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University of
Alberta Library



Rosettis Studios photos

Central Park



Section of Mount Ro



yal residential district



The business district — Eighth Avenue, looking west

railway rolling stock, leather products, and brewing, all plainly indigenous to the area, but more surprising is the manufacture of brushes, buttons, chemicals, electric equipment, hosiery, jewellery, pharmaceutical preparations, surgical instruments, and other products of an apparently exotic nature. A Calgary industry that is unique in North America is a ten million dollar plant which manufactures nitrogenous fertilizer utilizing air, natural gas, water and electricity. The output amounts to 350 tons daily and is shipped to a score of different countries.

But Calgary's commerce and industries are not limited to material things. All over this continent the last twenty-five years have seen a tremendous impulse given to tourist travel. Eighty-two miles west of Calgary is the town of Banff, headquarters of Canada's oldest and most popular national park, and connecting link with Yoho, Kootenay, and Jasper National Parks. The fame of this area is world-wide, and the flow of tourists is limited only by the available accommodation. Calgary commands the eastern and most important entrance to Banff National Park and the mountain playgrounds generally. The trip up the Bow River, whether by rail or road, from Calgary to Banff, Lake Louise, the Great Divide,

and down through the spiral tunnels or over the old railway right-of-way to Field, headquarters of Yoho National Park, is a crescendo of beauty perhaps not surpassed anywhere in the world.

Just as commerce begets manufacture, so tourist travel begets hotels and other services for the travelling public. The early hotels of Calgary could tell strange stories of the cow-town days, and some of that aroma still hangs about the lobbies of their modern successors, adding to the comfort now to be found in any good hostelry a spice which may be found nowhere else. Construction by the C.P.R. of the Palliser Hotel, opened in 1914, definitely marked Calgary as a centre of commercial and tourist travel. Today Calgary has twenty-eight hotels affording 2,200 rooms to the travelling public—an unusually large room capacity for a metropolitan area of some 120,000 people. Motor courts and tourist camps supplement this capacity.

City of Sunshine

And what of the city which has been built upon these corner-stones of cattle, wheat, oil, and commerce?

The first impression received by a visitor to Calgary, if the weather is on its good behaviour, as it usually is, is of sparkling

sunshine and a cloudless blue sky. (Average annual sunshine, 2,222 hours.) The altitude—3,489 feet—gives the air an exhilarating quality not unlike a mild intoxication. Indeed, the climate of Calgary must be reckoned as one of her major assets. Snowfall and rainfall are light, and the term "Sunny Alberta" has its basis in fact. Winter temperatures occasionally fall quite low, and summer midday temperatures may be high, although nights are invariably cool. But the outstanding feature of the climate is the chinook—the warm wind which comes down from the mountains and converts winter into springtime in a matter of hours. The coming of the chinook is indicated by an arch of cloud in the western sky, apparently where cold air and warm air are fighting it out for mastery. The warm air wins, and Calgary temperatures may go up 40 or 50 degrees in two or three hours. So while Calgary may have its occasional low temperatures, periods of extreme cold are usually interrupted by the chinook, and are of short duration. It is a peculiar quality of this warm dry wind that it seems to absorb the snow rather than to melt it, and the mud and slush of less favoured climes are practically unknown. Not without cause

did the Canadian-Indian poetess Pauline Johnson sing of Calgary:

Not here the lore of olden lands, their laurels
and their bays;
But what are these compared to one of all her
perfect days?
For naught can buy the jewel that upon her
forehead lies—
The cloudless sapphire heaven of her territorial
skies.

Partly because of the climate, and partly because of the absence of smoke, the walls of buildings are astagnishingly clean and their outlines are cut against the sky with the sharpness of a cameo. There is also a sense of compactness; of solidarity. Although residential areas have penetrated up the river valleys and over the surrounding hills, the heart of the city is in the valley of the Bow, more than a mile in width and as level as a prairie field. The survey is square and easily understood; the avenues run east and west and the streets run north and south, and the system of numbering discloses exactly the location of any house or building the moment its number is known. But almost before he has sensed his physical surroundings the visitor becomes aware of an atmosphere that is human rather than climatic. To put it in the fewest and simplest words—Calgary is a friendly city. Whether this is a relic of the open hospitality of the

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ranching days, a product of climate and altitude, or due to the type of people who have been attracted to Calgary and have made it their home, or to all these causes combined, the fact is that Calgary has a continent-wide reputation for friendliness.

Progressive Administration

And it is progressive. Calgary has neither fear nor compunction about breaking away from the old and establishing the new. It is a city committed to municipal ownership. From its street railway (now converted into a trolley-bus system), its municipal waterworks, electricity, municipal libraries, children's clinic, stadium, laboratory, hospitals, paving plant, golf club, cemeteries, swimming pools; its 453 acres of public parks and 315 acres of playgrounds; its zoo, with its range of animals from lion to kangaroo; its (privately-owned) Inglewood bird sanctuary; its display of life-size models—up to 75 feet in length and weighing 40 tons—of the dinosaurs which roamed Alberta swamps 60 million years ago, to its municipal airport, Calgary has accepted and demonstrated the principle of municipal ownership. A \$3,000,000 general hospital is under construction, and a \$1,000,000 Red Cross hospital for crippled children will be completed in 1950.

The form of government is Commission with Council. Elections are by proportional representation with single transferable vote, and the "initiative, referendum, and recall" is in effect. Half the members of the council are elected each year; the mayor and commissioner are elected for two years. The tax rate—59 mills—appears high, but should be read in conjunction with the fact that buildings and improvements are assessed at only one-half their value. The actual tax rate is therefore lower than in many cities which have a lower mill rate.

Calgary's internal life has always been orderly and peaceful. She was outside the area of direct disturbance during the Rebellion of 1885, but it was from here that General Strange marched a column to Edmonton. An Edmonton historian bears tribute that as soon as this column arrived from Calgary "the war was over, so far as Edmonton was concerned". In common with the rest of Canada Calgary felt the shock of two world wars, and contributed blood and energy to the cause of freedom. While prominent in all spheres of military activity, Calgary's contribution to Air Force training in World War II was outstanding. Clear atmosphere and wide spaces made the place ideal for that purpose, and the facilities of

A general view of Calgary from North Hill





In Calgary, looking north

the municipal airport were lent to the Government. Any attempt to present, even in the sketchiest way, Calgary's military achievements is not, however, within the scope of this article.

It would perhaps be a reflection on the optimism of Calgary if reference were omitted to the fact that the city was one of the focal points in the real estate boom which swept the West and collapsed about 1912. Sky-line Calgary subdivisions were sold in all parts of the country, and the resulting crash gave the city a setback from which it took many years to recover.

But recover it did, and its development has not all been along material lines. Calgary has a rich and growing cultural life. Its ninety-three schools and colleges supply the means of primary and advanced education, and its seven business colleges afford oppor-

tunity for those training for commercial careers. Its Institute of Technology and Art furnishes training in a large variety of courses. It established the first art department in Alberta, which paved the way for the Banff School of Fine Arts, held each summer at Banff, and now famous throughout Canada. The Calgary Allied Arts Centre furnishes a recreational focus for all branches of the arts and crafts. Its 134 churches supply the spiritual needs of the people, and 227 clubs and associations foster and promote various aspects of the life of the community.

So stands Calgary, City of the Foothills, City of Friendship, City of the Chinook and Oil Capital of Canada, her short but spectacular history behind her; ahead, a future inevitably associated with the growth and development of the Dominion.



*The chinook arch over the city of Calgary, heralding
the welcome warm winds from the west.*